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Construction Industry News from City Hall

*Superintendent of Central Inspection
Kurt Schroeder*

NEW BUILDING INSPECTION HOURS

The Office of Central Inspection is committed to improving customer service and operating in an efficient manner. The construction industry seems to prefer requesting the majority of the building inspections between the hours of 9:00 A.M. and 12:00 P.M.. In order to accomplish this task and in effort to cut back overtime, the building inspectors have began observing 30 minute lunch periods, rather than the 60 minute lunch period that is now observed. This will provide an extra 30 minutes of inspection time per inspector during the A.M. inspection period.

This change will require a work hour adjustment. The inspectors will work 7:30 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.. They will remain available to reach in the office from 7:30 to 8:30 A.M. and return to the office between 3:00 and 4:00 P.M. when their inspection schedules permit.

The electrical inspectors have also adjusted their workhours. The electrical inspectors office hours are 7:30 to 8:30A.M. and will be in the field from 8:30A.M. to 4:00P.M.

Ray Sledge, Building Construction Inspection Supervisor

OCI Tidbits:

- 2004 was a record building permit year. New home starts exceeded the previous annual record by over 100 homes (nearly 1,700 homes permits were issued in 2004). The total building permit valuation in 2004 was about \$535,000,000, exceeding the previous annual record by \$40,000,000.
Through June 30, 2005, the Wichita building industry remains strong. The total number of building permits issued is slightly ahead of the number issued through the first six months of 2004. While total building permit valuation is down about 15% (due in part to the completion of all large USD 259 Bond Project permitting in 2004), the number of new home permits issued is only 3% behind the record pace of 2004.
- ***“E-Permits”***, OCI’s new Internet construction permitting and inspection scheduling service for Wichita-licensed contractors, has greatly exceeded expectations during its first five months of operation. Contractors have been pleased with its user-friendly process, and new contractors are logging on and signing up nearly every day. The official rollout date for “E-Permits” was February 4, 2005. Since rollout (through the end of June 2005), over 1,600 building and trade construction permits have been processed through “E-Permits”, and nearly 8,000 permit inspections have been scheduled. “E-Permits” is also saving staff time on permit processing. Nearly all “E-Permits” are being reviewed and issued within 2-3 business hours of contractor permit application submittal.
Try it out. Just go to <http://permits.wichita.gov> and sign in at the [Contractor Login](#) page using your 4-digit contractor license number and your current TELUS Pin number (or go to the City of Wichita’s web page at <http://wichita.gov> and click on the “E-Permits” login on the home page). ***Remember, even if you don’t apply for permits using E-Permits, you can still review your permits, view permit activity and schedule required inspections.***
- OCI is now working to expand “E-Permits” permitting services to include new residential one & two family construction & additions. Testing with a limited number of new home builders should ensue in August to early September. OCI intends to roll out this Internet permitting service for new construction to all residential new construction contractors by the end of September 2005.
- OCI is currently reviewing the Wichita Existing Buildings Rehabilitation and Change of Use Code. The purpose of this locally written code (originally adopted in April 2001) is to remove barriers to adaptive re-use of older buildings, and to encourage the practical continued use or re-use of existing buildings and structures. Amendment or update proposals will be developed for presentation to building industry design and construction professionals, and to the Board of Code Standards or Appeals in the latter part of 2005.
- The provision of cell phones for OCI construction field inspectors seems to be working well, providing more efficient and effective communication between contractors and inspectors. It is also creating new efficiencies by allowing inspectors to leave the office earlier and return later (since they are not tied to their desks to answer phones). This is helping to assure more timely inspections, while reducing the amount of extra or overtime necessary to complete daily requested inspections.

Kurt Schroeder, Superintendent

Minimum Submittal Requirements for Commercial Projects

Incomplete project submittals on new construction continue to be an issue that affects the overall processing time necessary for project review. Noted below are the minimum standards for project submittal:

- 1). Three (3) complete sets of plans plus one set of specs (if available).
- 2). Two additional copies of the site utility plan showing the location of all utilities serving the building, specifically water and sewer (storm and sanitary) lines with associated vaults, meters, drains and other associated devices. The utility plan shall specify the size, type and slope of lines to be installed. In addition, the site utility plan shall indicate the size and location of adjacent public utilities in easements and/or streets.
 - 2a). Drawings for storm drains 12 inches or larger shall be submitted to the Office of the City Engineer (OCE) for approval and may occur before or after building drawing submittal. Central Inspection will need confirmation of OCE approval prior to release of either a conditional or full permit.
 - 2b). Any discharge from the building or any area-way drain lines 10 inches or smaller shall be approved by the Storm Water Management Office (part of the OCE). The Storm Water Engineer will require a copy of the site utility plan and a discharge verification letter signed by the property owner for review and approval. A form letter is available at the City website: www.wichita.gov under the Office of Central Inspection, then go to “Documents and Forms” and select “Storm Water Quality Compliance Statement”.
- 3). Devices, such as grease interceptors and mud & oil interceptors shall be shown on the site utility plan. The plans shall indicate the number, size and manufacturer of the devices.
- 4). One additional copy of the site drainage plan indicating the total impervious area.
- 5). Where construction activity disturbs one acre or more of the site, an NPDES permit shall be filed with and approved by the State of Kansas. At the time of project submittal, a copy of the permit request shall be provided (necessary prior to consideration of a conditional permit request) with the final approval by the State necessary prior to project approval.
- 6). On projects where the owner wants to start construction under a conditional permit, one additional set of plans shall be provided at the time of project submittal.
- 7). On multi-tenant buildings, a copy of the proposed tenant lease plan shall be provided for addressing purposes, if available.
- 8). The legal description of the property shall be noted on the site plan.

Additional information on project submittal is available at the City website: www.wichita.gov under Office of Central Inspection.

Paul Hays

Electric meter clearances

There has been some confusion lately over the working space clearance around and in front of the electrical meter. WESTAR requires a minimum of 36 inches of free space in front of the meter enclosure and 18 inches of free space to each side of the meter enclosure and 7 feet high. What this is saying is that a box 36 inches deep by 36 inches wide by 7 feet high has to be able to sit centered in front of the meter enclosure. A gas meter must maintain a minimum of 36 inches from the electric meter measured horizontally. This working space is required for both new and existing meter locations except on an existing location WESTAR is not requiring locations that do not conform to this requirement to be changed unless the meter enclosure is being replaced or the item located inside the working space is replaced. If the meter enclosure is replaced and there is not the minimum working space at the existing location the meter will be required to be moved to a location where the working space would be maintained. If an existing air conditioner or any other item is intruding into the working space of an electric meter enclosure that air conditioner or item is replaced it would have to be relocated outside of the working space of the electric meter.

For safety reasons and availability of parts, WESTAR will no longer reset a meter on a 110-volt service. This service will have to be upgraded to a minimum of 100 amperes. ***If the meter enclosure on a 60/70-amp 240-volt service is damaged or pulled away from the building or structure the meter enclosure and riser will be required to be replaced and upgraded to a minimum of 100 amperes.*** As long as the service cable is not damaged and the service panel is safe and met a previous code they would not have to be upgraded. A ground rod would be required, if an existing one is not present, and grounded to the service panel in an approved manner.

Tom Kerschen, Construction Inspection Supervisor, Electrical / Elevator

Cell Phone Numbers Building and Electrical Inspectors

Capello, Kortney	Building	871-6392
Davis, Lance	Building	871-4292
Dill, Mike	Building	871-4879
Garcia, Jim	Building	871-2302
Hultman, Darlene	Building	871-6830
Jack, Richard	Building	871-7459
Mc Menomey, Tim	Building	871-6459
Meier, Richard	Building	871-6018
Sledge, Ray	Building	871-4849
Betts, Tim	Electric	871-1790
DeLeon, Ismael	Electric	871-6689
Kerschen, Tom	Electric	871-1615
Nordick, Chris	Electric	871-6770
Robinson, Bob	Electric	871-6607
Schauner, Steve	Electric	871-2622

ATTENTION ALL CONTRACTORS

Please be aware of the location of the termination point of the following items: dryer vents; sidewall venting of fireplaces; furnaces; sump pumps. We have received complaints from citizens/clients regarding these items, specifically in that they are discharging too close to gas meters and/or condensing units. Please keep the proper distances for all such discharges and related intakes, and take notice of the location of gas meters and condensing units. Some of these are hard to relocate at the time of the final, and such relocation could be costly.

TESTING

Exams given at WSU are no longer available. Here is a run down on exams.

All **Lawn Irrigation exams** are taken at Exporior (Block) or you may sign up with PHCCA and take the State exam. The PHCCA also provides a lawn irrigation class if you are interested in taking one.

Journeyman or Master Exam for HVAC is as follows: IF you sign up with the city to take the Masters or Journeyman Block, you will be tested out of the 2000 IMC. If you sign up through the county, you will be tested out of the 1997 UMC. If you go on line with the International Code Council, (ICC) you can register to take either the 2000 IMC or the 1997 UMC. This does not require a pre-application from the city or county. Once the ICC exam is passed, you can bring the results and required documentation (proof of experience) and get your city or county certificate.

If you have any questions about any of the above, call the city, county or David Finley at the PHCCA.

Dan Leidy, Construction Inspection Supervisor, Plumbing and Mechanical

Cell Phone Numbers Mechanical and Plumbing Inspectors

Nethercot, Stoney	Mechanical	871-2964
Shores, Ron	Mechanical	871-6764
Grandstaff, Lee	Plumbing	871-2820
Johnson, Keith	Plumbing	871-2987
Leidy, Dan	Plumbing	871-4539
Peterman, Phil	Plumbing	871-2282
Ritter, Frank	Plumbing	871-4539
Young, Roger	Plumbing	871-4602



CITY OF
WICHITA

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